HOME

Binder basics

Make it findable and safe.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

CHOOSE ACCESS AND PRIVACY

Use a labeled waterproof folder in a known location plus a secure digital backup if appropriate. Tell trusted household members where it is; do not put passwords, full account numbers, or unnecessary identity details on an exposed page.

- [ ] Write the binder location and last-updated date.
- [ ] Choose one out-of-area contact.
- [ ] Use copies, not irreplaceable originals, where possible.
- [ ] Review access needs for children, guests, and caregivers.

EXAMPLE

Cover note: ·Emergency information binder: hall closet top shelf. Updated 12 May. Digital copy held by Alex.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Who needs to know this exists?

What details should remain in a secure password manager instead?

This organizer does not replace emergency planning advice from local authorities. For immediate danger call local emergency services. Keep sensitive information secure and share it only with trusted people.

HOME

People and contacts

Record who to call and how to reconnect.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

HOUSEHOLD CONTACT CARD

List names, phone numbers, preferred communication methods, language needs, and a meeting point. Confirm numbers periodically rather than assuming they remain current.

- [ ] Add building manager, utility outage lines, veterinarian, school or care contacts.
- [ ] Name an out-of-area contact who can relay messages.
- [ ] Note accessibility, mobility, or communication needs in plain terms.
- [ ] Write two meeting locations: near home and outside the neighborhood.

EXAMPLE

Check-in script: ·I am safe at the library meeting point. My phone battery is low. Please text our out-of-area contact if you cannot reach me.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which contact can coordinate if local networks are busy?

Where could we meet if home is inaccessible?

HOME

Home systems

Know what you have without improvising repairs.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

UTILITY REFERENCE PAGE

Record the location of water, gas if present, electrical panel, heating controls, alarms, and fire extinguisher. Photograph labels and keep appliance model information. Only shut off systems when trained, instructed by authorities, or responding to an immediate documented hazard.

- [ ] Mark exits and where spare keys are secured.
- [ ] Record maintenance company and landlord contact.
- [ ] Keep manuals or official links with model numbers.
- [ ] Test alarms on the manufacturer schedule and replace batteries as directed.

EXAMPLE

Entry: ·Water shutoff: utility closet, right wall. Building manager: 555-0140.
Do not access gas equipment; call provider.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What system would I not know how to identify under stress?

Who is authorized to repair each system?

HOME

Evacuation plan

Leave early when officials direct it.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

ROUTES AND GO BAG

Plan two ways out of each sleeping area when feasible and a meeting place away from hazards. Keep a small go bag with water, flashlight, charger, copies of key contacts, weather-appropriate items, and individually needed supplies.

- [ ] Follow official alerts instead of rumors.
- [ ] Take medication and assistive devices if safe to do so.
- [ ] Do not re-enter an unsafe building to retrieve property.
- [ ] Plan transportation and pet arrangements in advance.

EXAMPLE

Practice question: ·If the front stairwell is blocked, where do we exit and where do we meet?·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What would make leaving difficult at night?

Which neighbor or local service could assist with mobility?

HOME

Medical and care notes

Keep essential facts concise and protected.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

EMERGENCY-READY SUMMARY

With consent, record allergies, important conditions, medications, providers, pharmacy, and insurance contact details. Update after changes. This is an information sheet, not a treatment plan; seek medical help from qualified services.

- [ ] Use medication names and doses exactly from labels.
- [ ] Include communication preferences and emergency contacts.
- [ ] Keep copies protected from casual view.
- [ ] Ask caregivers what information they need in an emergency.

EXAMPLE

Format: ·Allergy: penicillin (reported). Pharmacy: Main Street Pharmacy, phone. Medication list verified: date.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

When was each person·s list last verified?

Who may share this information with responders?

HOME

Documents and property

Preserve proof without overexposing it.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

INVENTORY AND INSURANCE

Photograph rooms and major items, noting model and serial numbers where useful. Store policy contacts, claim instructions, lease, and repair records. Do not wait for an emergency to learn whether a claim requires documentation.

- [ ] Back up photos in a secure account or trusted storage.
- [ ] Keep purchase receipts when practical.
- [ ] Record damage with date, wide photo, and close photo.
- [ ] Ask an insurer or tenant-support professional questions about coverage; do not assume.

EXAMPLE

Inventory line: ·Laptop, black, model and serial recorded, purchased month/year; photo file name inventory-office-01.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which high-value or hard-to-replace items need photos?

Where is the official claims contact?

HOME

Review and practice

A binder works only if it stays current.

HOME EMERGENCY INFORMATION BINDER

QUARTERLY UPDATE

Set a recurring reminder to verify contacts, supplies, routes, and documents. Practice a short check-in and evacuation conversation without creating fear. Record what changed and replace expired items according to their labels.

- [ ] Check alarms and flashlight function.
- [ ] Update pet, caregiver, school, and work contacts.
- [ ] Review local official alert sign-up options.
- [ ] Shred outdated sensitive copies securely.

EXAMPLE

Review note: ·September: replaced flashlight batteries, updated manager number, moved meeting point due to construction.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What changed in our home since the last review?

What one practice step would increase confidence?